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THE DOGMATIC AUTHORITY OF THE PAPACY.

THE ENCYCLICAL ON MODERNISM.

BY THE MOST REVEREND JOHN IRELAND, ARCHBISHOP OF ST. PAUL.

THE article in the NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW for last December, from the pen of Mr. Charles Johnston, "The Catholic Reformation and the Papacy," covers much ground, nearly the whole history of the Papacy. Lest I be unreasonably lengthy in my reply, I will confine myself to what I take to be the main point at issue, "the dogmatic despotism of the Papacy," with particular reference to the recent Encyclical on Modernism.

The term "despotism" is too violent to be accepted, without due reservation, even for argument's sake: it is, at first encounter at least, too redolent of arbitrariness and of assumed power to suit my Catholic taste. I should prefer the term "authority," and to say, instead of the dogmatic despotism, the dogmatic authority of the Papacy. But with this remark I let the matter pass.

According to Mr. Johnston the Papacy is wrong when, at any time, it undertakes to be dogmatic, to teach, to impose upon the human intellect dogmas of religion: it is estopped, he maintains, from doing so by the example of Christ and the Apostles, by the fact that Christianity is not a religion of dogmas or creeds, but, instead, a life, a hope, an inspiration. Mr. Johnston adopts as his own the words of the Milanese Review, "*Il Rinnovamento*":

"Christianity is life: it is unquenchable aspiration; it is hope; it is a striving of the whole being towards that which in life partakes of the eternal. . . . It is in vain that we try to enclose Christianity in intellectual systems and definite expressions of development. . . . And if we deem possible a new Christian civilization it is on one condition: that the spirit of Christ signifies the spirit of liberation, no

one seeking to confine it to his own theories, hypotheses or systems; but each one feeling it as an imminent command in his heart to uplift his life in all its activities."

Doubtless, if religion is merely "life," dogmas and creeds are doomed: a teacher of positive, objective doctrine is at once ruled out of court. And this, I may be allowed to note, is the popular religion of the day. To-day the cry is: "No dogma, no creed! Only the life of the spirit, the good man following out in daily practice the rulings of conscience." But is this creedless, undogmatic religion the Christian religion? "*Il Rinno-*
vamento," again quoted approvingly by Mr. Johnston, continues:

"Where do we find Jesus claiming despotic authority over men's intellects, and demanding that they shall renounce their convictions? . . . Jesus does not say: 'Whoever dares to talk otherwise than I, let him be anathema.' He does say: 'Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' . . . Jesus does not say: 'Whosoever does depart from the orthodox faith, let him die the death.' He does say: 'He that hath My commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me.'"

Unhappily for Mr. Johnston and "*Il Rinno-*
vamento," and also for the popular religion of the day, what is given as not said by Christ is precisely what Christ did say. The commission to the Apostles was: "Go ye into the whole world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved: but he that believeth not shall be condemned"; or, as King James's version reads, "shall be damned." The Apostles are bidden to preach, to teach: to their preaching and teaching intellectual assent must be given: where such assent is refused, "anathema" is pronounced, damnation is threatened.

The religion put forth by Christ was a dogmatic religion—a series of facts and principles, to which, under severest penalty, absolute submission of mind must be accorded. Christ was the teacher, the bearer of a message, to which the mind of the hearer was to be set in unison, and, afterwards, under the influence of the mind, the other faculties of the soul. The faith required from disciples was, before all else, an assent of the intellect. "To this end was I born and for this came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth." "If ye continue in My words, then ye are My disciples, and ye shall know the truth." Christ taught His personal rank and dignity, His Mes-

siahship, His divine sonship, His oneness with the Father: He taught His right to revise and reinterpret the Mosaic Law, His power to forgive sins: He taught the establishment of His Church, the giving of His flesh to eat and of His blood to drink, the coming of the Holy Spirit, the communication of His own mission to the Apostles. We need not now discuss the precise meaning of those several preachings of Christ: but a meaning to them there surely was, and that meaning, such as He intended it, was to be accepted, believed, even though, as in the Sixth Chapter of John, the announcement was "a hard saying," from which the multitude had turned in scorn. The faith Christ called for was belief in His words, submission to His authority as Master and Teacher.

The Apostles knew of none other than a dogmatic religion; they allowed none other to their disciples. Theirs was a religion of faith—of faith that came from hearing: "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ." The purpose of the Apostolic preaching was to destroy "every height that exalted itself against the knowledge of God," and to bring "into captivity every understanding unto the obedience of Christ." What the Apostles taught was the "deposit," a substantial doctrine, no mere aspiration of the soul: it was "the faithful word which is according to doctrine." It was "the sound doctrine" by which the gainsayers were to be convinced; it was "the form of sound words." The disciples were exhorted to walk "confirmed in the faith" as they had "learned it," not cheated "by philosophy or vain deceits," not carried about "by every wind of doctrine." Whenever necessary, they were to be rebuked sharply, "that they may be sound in the faith." Were any one to teach differently from what had been once declared, were he a very angel from heaven, he is accursed. Whoever departs from the faith, "who continueth not in the doctrine of Christ," is to be avoided, not even noticed with a friendly salute. And "the faith" was "once for aye delivered to the saints": it was to be transmitted to others with most sacred care. "Keep the good deposit committed to thy trust," wrote Paul; "O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding the profane novelties of words and oppositions of knowledge falsely so called."

Plainly, the religion preached by the Apostles was a dogmatic religion, having a well-defined creed, a "faithful word," a "form

of sound words"; and the prime duty imposed upon succeeding Christian teachers was to guard well this "faithful word," this "form of sound words," to hold it unsullied "by vain philosophies and profane novelties of words." What else, we may say, is Pius X doing in his Encyclical but obeying those solemn injunctions? Paul speaks; Pius X follows out his injunctions.

Christ, indeed, was "the life": He came to beget in humanity a new life, arousing it from sinfulness and lethargy, lifting it towards the skies, quickening it into the very life of the Godhead. But before Christ was the life, He was the truth: "I am the way, the truth and the life." He first addresses the intellect, laying before it the principles and truths, through which the heart and the will are to be moved into life and action. Any other course of evangelization were a lowering of human dignity, a treatment of man as if man were merely a creature of sense and emotion: and it were, also, a mere beating of the air, necessarily void of substantial and enduring effect. Of itself, the will is blind: it requires illumination and guidance from the intellect. A mere call to regeneration is sterile sound. There is no real moral elevation that is not based upon principles; there is no life-giving religion that is not endowed with a fertilizing creed.

In teaching a dogmatic religion, Pius X has fullest warrant from Christ and the Apostles. Indeed, did he not teach, did he not raise aloud the cry of alarm when peril is nigh, he would be faithless to his trust, heedless to his commission: "Teach all nations." The hour came to the Papacy when speech was an imperative duty: the Encyclical on Modernism followed.

The Encyclical is not, as some have imagined who judged it from its title without a glance through its contents, a condemnation of the Twentieth Century—of the material and social progress which is the proud boast of the age. Far from this: the Encyclical applauds our material and social achievements. Quoting the words of his predecessor, Pius X writes:

"Apply yourselves energetically to the study of natural sciences: the brilliant discoveries and the bold and useful applications made of them in our times, which have won such applause from our contemporaries, will be an object of perpetual praise to those that come after us."

Nor in any sense is the Encyclical what Mr. Johnston asserts it to be—a repulse of intellectual life:

"It is both interesting and ominous to find the Vatican seeking thus to stem the tide of intellectual life, and ordering the combating of error even to the shedding of blood."

If Mr. Johnston has in mind the tide of intellectual life outside the region of divine revelation, he may lay down his fears. Divine revelation alone enters into the province of Papal vigilance. Other branches of knowledge the Church leaves to their own methods and their own ambitions. Whenever it is found in contact with them, it is only for the purpose of stimulating them to more fruitful growth: and how beneficial in this regard its co-operation has been history bears ample testimony. True, in the *Syllabus of Errors*, given out by a Roman Congregation shortly before the appearance of the *Encyclical*, a condemned proposition reads as follows: "Under no respect does it appertain to the Church to pass judgment concerning the assertions of human sciences." But Mr. Johnston misreads the proposition when he renders it into this general form, "The Church has the right to pass judgment on natural sciences." Upon the rigid, well-ascertained discoveries and conclusions of science the Church passes no judgment; what it arraigns before its tribunal, and with plenary right on its part, are "the assertions" of certain scientists, in contradiction with the teachings of revelation, whose sayings, far from being well-established conclusions, are simply, as the *Encyclical* calls them, "opinions" and "vagaries."

The *Encyclical* is a defence of religious truth against certain vital errors that have come into vogue, inside and outside the Catholic Church, in these modern times. Against those errors it declares a relentless war, in which, however, the arms brought into use will be those of reason and of revelation—not those of human blood, as Mr. Johnston has been tempted to imagine. The words that have frightened my esteemed friend—"Even unto the shedding of blood"—were spoken by the Pope during an allocution to a gathering of French bishops, a year or so ago, in the Palace of the Vatican. But the blood which the good Pope called for, in case blood were to be at any time the order of the day in France, was that of the bishops themselves, whom he fain would have imbued with the spirit of martyrdom. It was not in the intention of the Pope, we may be quite sure, to invoke a war of extermination against the enemies of the Church

seated in power upon the banks of the Seine, or against heretics and unbelievers elsewhere in the world.

The Encyclical condemns the "New Theology," as it is called in England, where the Protestant R. J. Campbell and the Catholic George Tyrrell have been its leading protagonists. The same theory of religion had found utterance in Continental countries of Europe under varied names—"The Religion of Immanence," "The Religion of Action," "The New Apologetics." Who, specifically, the writers are whose teachings are placed under censure, and to what degree each one has given cause for condemnation, the Pope does not say. It is quite possible that the one or the other may not have held to all the errors now gathered together and mutually interconnected in the Encyclical under the name of Modernism. But that with the one or with the other the errors, as rehearsed, did come to the front, none will deny who has at all kept himself *au courant* with the religious literature of recent times.

The starting-point of Modernism is the assumption that, of itself, human reason is powerless to establish either the existence of God as a transcendent reality, or the divinity of the mission and the person of Christ. With some, the cause of this mental attitude is an adherence to the Kantian system of Philosophy, which teaches that human reason does not reach beyond "phenomena" or appearances of things, that "noumena," or realities back of appearances, totally escape its grasp of vision. With others, it is what they term the weakness and insufficiency of intellectual proofs, available in favor either of natural religion or of Christian revelation. In both cases the conclusion is the same: intellectualism is abandoned as a basis of religion. Another basis must be sought: it is found in the inner sense and experience of the soul, in its cravings for life, in its motives of action. Feeling is substituted for reason: subjective emotion for intellectual assent.

To the new theology, God is unknown and unknowable. On this score it accepts the teachings of Comte, Hamilton and Spencer. But must we, it asks, overlook on this account God as a non-existent being or as one in whom we have no concern, towards whom we have no duties? No conclusion of this kind is allowed. Conscience, the Kantists say, clamors for the Supreme Legislator: therefore He is; therefore we accept Him.

The idea of God is chief among "the values" of life, say the Ritschlians of Germany, the Pragmatists of England and of America: God, as "a value," enters, of necessity, into the thoughts and the movements of the soul, and must therefore be taken as a reality. The throbbings of the heart, the thirstings of the soul, say the apostles of "Immanence" and of "Action," imperiously tend towards the Infinite, who therefore must be and is a reality. Indeed, continue the latter, the deep experiences of the soul are such vivid revelations of God that they must be and are the very voice of God—God "immanent" in us, the source within us of life and of action.

In those several views and theories we may see partial truths, that need by no means be brushed aside, when we are seeking to prove the transcendent reality of the Infinite. Conscience calls for a judge, who ought to be God: the exigencies of the soul clamor for satiety, which can come only from the Infinite. Facts those are that dispose the mind to search for an Almighty Being, transcending the soul of man, transcending the whole external universe, and beforehand prepare us to hold earnestly to Him, when once we have caught a glimpse of His glory. Serviceable they are as a starting-point for argument: but of themselves and in themselves they are not an argument to compel conviction. Emotions and experiences do not reach out into the objective; they do not establish the existence of a reality independent of the human soul. This the intellect alone can do. The radical mistake of Modernism and of its methods of apologetics is that it excludes or, at least, minimizes overmuch the functions of the intellect, thereby unduly reducing its theodicy to sentiment—to mere subjectivism. Against this subjectivism Pius X appeals to the reasoning faculty in man, to the intellect, whose rights and convincing force he valiantly defends: he exhibits before us the Eternal and the All Powerful, as discovered by the intellect—the Supreme Being whom reason points out, above and beyond all contingent existences, whom, consequently, rational man can and must worship as Lord and Master. Pius X teaches as the Royal Prophet taught, as the Apostle Paul taught. "The heavens show forth the glory of God, and the firmament declareth the work of His hands." "For the invisible things of Him, from whom the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made; His eternal

power also and His divinity; so that they are inexcusable, because when they knew God, they have not glorified Him as God, or given thanks." The Encyclical of Pius is the defence of God in the heavens and at the same time of the intellect in man.

The "New Theology" brings its philosophy to bear upon supernatural revelation and the person of Christ—with a similar denial of the powers of the human intellect, and, in effect, with a similar effacement of the divine in revelation and in Christ. The divine is not denied; rather its defence, we are told, is the purpose of the "New Theology." But history, and reason working upon history, we are again told, do not, cannot, there discover the divine. So far as history speaks, what is called supernatural revelation is naught but the outpouring of the spiritual emotions and the experiences of certain souls rich and exuberant above the ordinary human soul: it is the gift to humanity, from favored sons of the race, of the plenitude of their conscious and sub-conscious store of sentiment and truth. Those favored ones were the prophets and the sages of the ages. Jesus is one of them—the highest, indeed, and the greatest: none other so perfect as Jesus was ever seen, none other is likely to be seen. Still, so far as history teaches, the voice of Jesus, as that of other prophets, is the voice of man—the divine is not manifest. Miracles may be quoted: but they are of no avail on the pages of history, they are merely extraordinary occurrences and extraordinary manifestations of inherent, though unknown, forces of nature: the divine is not manifest. What, then, of the divine heretofore believed to belong to prophets and to Christ? What of the divine person of Christ? Must His divinity be denied, accounted a vain fancy of His followers? By no means, replies the "New Theology": let us fall back upon "Immanence," and all is made right. The divine within us recognizes the divine in the prophets of the race—especially so in Jesus. Our own spiritual emotions and experiences are not only in unison with the emotions and the experiences expressed in their teachings, but are, truly, enriched and glorified to a degree most wondrous. The divine within us is the touchstone of the divine in others: it speaks, it teaches: the prophets become men of God; Jesus, who at first was seen and known as man, is now the Son of God, very God. What, we ask, is all this talk of "Immanence," but subjectivism of the most impotent kind—mere individualism, of no

effect whatever in arguing with others, who are free to say that no such emotions and experiences bubble up within their souls? No; sentiment is not argument, and the human intellect is not powerless to read the divine in history. The doctrine of fideism, of which the "New Theology" is but a recrudescence, was long ago condemned by the Church: the Church scorns a foundation for its teachings which does not rest on reason and history: it demands as its credentials the testimony of the intellect. Christ wrought His miracles, physical and moral—works which no mere natural or human power could produce—and, then, He taught with authority, and we believe His words as those of One coming from the invisible world to teach and to reform humanity—as the words of the Incarnate God, whom He declared Himself to be. This is the doctrine of the Encyclical on Modernism, and who among Christians will find fault with it?

"Immanence" moves apace. Scriptures, Church, sacraments, dogmas, pass through the same crucible and come out equally shorn of the divine splendor with which Christendom has heretofore adorned them. The Scriptures are the formulated thought and emotion of privileged prophets of humanity. The Church, as it comes before us in history, grew up with the years, in human fashion, gathering into its fabric elements from surrounding philosophies and institutions, widening its life and purposes as new needs pressed forward, or new opportunities for work unfolded themselves before its onward march. So far as history shows, it is an evolution from a natural beginning through causes and methods purely natural. Its sacraments are symbols of its natural life and aspirations, methods of its own choosing through which the individual enters into corporate union with his fellows, or expresses by outward act his continued participation in such union. Dogmas there are, but dogmas have no objective meaning save as they express the emotions and experiences of the soul, and as these emotions and experiences happen to respond to objective realities. Dogmas, too, change in form and expression, as new conditions of spiritual life and feeling arise, and new formulas are required to translate these new conditions into human speech. So far as realities may be said to underlie emotions and expressions, the realities do not change; but dogmas, the outward expression of them, do change, and are as fluctuating as were the emotions which they symbolized. The creed of

Nicæa and Ephesus, good and serviceable, and in a manner true, centuries ago, may be, at a later period, out of joint with the requirements of human consciousness: and a restatement of their terms becomes imperative.

Here, again, is a fatal, most effective effacement of the supernatural and the divine. Church and Sacraments are as nothing to us if they are only natural and human: and mere trust in our inner emotions and experiences can never lift them to the plane of the supernatural. The dogmas of religion, reduced to the conditions of temporary expedients of language, no longer convey to the mind assured realities: what to-day is said in one form is to-morrow said in another. Dogmas unstable and changing in their meaning are not symbols of stable and permanent realities, such as divine truths must be: they are of no value to the Christian soul. Very different, be it noted, is this Modernist evolution of dogma from the logical development of doctrinal expression allowed in the teaching of the Church. Here there is a widening, but no changing, of meaning. With time, revealed truth is more fully apprehended by the mind of the Church, and new formulas enter into its creeds to express its better understanding of divine truth. But former expressions do not lose their original meaning: they are ever true, ever immovable from their first intent and significance.

Is there wonder that the "New Theology," in its each and every bearing, as described in the Encyclical, has been solemnly condemned by Pius X? Could he, the guardian of the "deposit," have remained silent while the axe was laid to the very roots of the tree of Christianity, and the divine sap, which alone gives to it life and reason of being, was being violently denied to its trunk and branches? Who, worshipping a God in the heavens, and adoring a Christ in history, will cast a stone at His teaching? This is an age of unbelief in the supernatural, an age of rebellion against a power above the earth, who dares to intervene, by special act or voice, in the affairs of men. Hence certain mental attitudes towards Christian revelation. One is that of the radical unbeliever, who incontinently brushes aside as fable and vain-imagining what has been heretofore held as supernatural—boldly removing God from the affairs of men, and sentencing Christ and the Christian Church to oblivion if not to contempt and opprobrium. The other, that of men un-

willing to forego Christianity, wishing even to champion it against unbelief, who, in an imprudent anxiety to gain for it a hearing, adopt interpretations and explanations at variance with truth, more fitted to destroy than to upbuild. Against all enemies, avowed or covert, the Papacy raises its voice in tones most emphatic. It defends integral Christianity; it will allow none other.

It is not the Catholic Church alone that the Encyclical protects: it is the whole Christian religion, in its vital principles, in its foundation-stones in history and human reason. The Encyclical should be acclaimed by all Christians; by all, Pius X should be hailed as the champion of the sacred heritage in which they discern their hopes for time and eternity.

The Princeton *Theological Quarterly*, reviewing the work of a French writer, a conspicuous exponent of Modernistic ideas since condemned by the Pope, printed these words in its late October number:

"The criticism which he [the French writer] advocates is a criticism, in fact, which makes a clear sweep of all the historical foundations of the Christian system, and builds them with totally different materials and, of course, totally different results. . . . Anti-supernaturalism is the very principle of presently prevailing criticism, and as supernaturalism is the very principle of Christianity this criticism and Christianity can live together in harmony just as little as fire and water. The Abbé Loisy and Abbé Houtin . . . they may intend otherwise, they may fancy otherwise, but what they are doing . . . is to implant within it [the Roman Communion] a leaven which, if it ever becomes active, cannot stop working until it drives out every vestige of Christianity itself. The cause of the Roman Curia in this battle is sadly confused with the cause of Christianity itself."

What the Princeton *Quarterly* wrote of certain phases of so-called Modernism before Pius had spoken, it ought to write textually of the whole system, as now reprobated in the Encyclical. Of course, the Pope is dogmatic—clear and precise, firm and authoritative: a teacher having authority, and speaking to be clearly understood, necessarily is dogmatic. The Papacy is dogmatic; so was Paul; so was Christ.

An objection against the Papal claim to dogmatic authority raised by Mr. Johnston is that, logically and in fact, a claim of the kind leads to religious persecution, as is proven by the wars of religion noted in the annals of past ages. That dogmatic

teaching in faith and morals begets in the teacher the spirit of persecution, I very promptly deny. And there is no need that I discuss the wars of religion of which the story is evoked. To understand those wars we should understand the spirit of the times in which they occurred—times, happily, far removed from our own. And we should sift carefully the story of those wars, so as to give to the civil power and to popular uprisings their share of responsibility. I shall only remark that, besides quoting persecutions of heretics in Catholic countries, Mr. Johnston should have quoted also persecutions of Catholics under Protestant governments, some of which easily bear off the palm for unmitigated ferociousness, as Mr. Johnston's own *History of Ireland*—an admirable and most fair-minded book—so clearly shows. But let us leave the past to bury its own dead. To-day, certainly, dogmatic authority in the Papacy means naught save the right to defend, with the spiritual arms of truth, the religion of God and His Christ.

Lack of space forbids me from reviewing certain minor points in the Encyclical criticised by Mr. Johnston. I equally pass over the disciplinary parts of the Encyclical. These are of concern only to Catholics, "*affaires de famille*"—of slight interest to the general public. The chief issue raised by Mr. Johnston was the dogmatic despotism of the Papacy. Well, so far as this despotism comes before us in its teachings on Modernism, we should gratefully accept it.

Never in Christian history was there an age of such religious restlessness as is witnessed to-day: never before were such deadly shafts aimed at Christ and His Gospel: never was there so much need of clear authoritative Christian teaching. To-day, the Papacy is the sole teaching power in Christendom. The Papacy gone, no organic authority remains to defend Christ and His revelation: no solemn voice is heard speaking in tones not uncertain in behalf of the olden deposit of the Christian faith. The Papacy gone, Christianity is on the way to be, before very long, a faint whisper from the grave of a great religion that once taught and moved the nations.

JOHN IRELAND.